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Judiciary Committee



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The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 1, 2022

Testimony in SUPPORT HB 1319- Family Law - Grounds for Divorce - Gender Transition.

Good afternoon colleagues,

Today I submit this legislation on behalf of a constituent who wanted to keep her identity anonymous for fear of professional backlash.

As you heard in her testimony and as the lawyers on the committee can attest to, spouses of partners who are gender transitioning have no legal grounds for absolute divorce as Maryland law currently only allows divorce for the following reasons:

Grounds for a limited divorce are; Separation, Cruelty and excessively vicious conduct, and Desertion.

Additional grounds for absolute divorce are; Mutual consent, Adultery, Imprisonment for a crime, and insanity.

Surely in the eyes of the law, transitioning ones gender should be grounds for divorce. As we take great consideration for those who are transitioning, we should also extend the same consideration for the spouses who are deeply affected by this, just as they would be with any of the other current grounds for divorce.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lauren Arikan".

Delegate Lauren Arikan